



Bowie Brigade nabs suspected mortar cell team leader, recruiter.

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Red Team conducts largest cordon to date, searches over 3,000 homes in Al Rashid.

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Medics save lives of ING comrades following deadly mortar attack.

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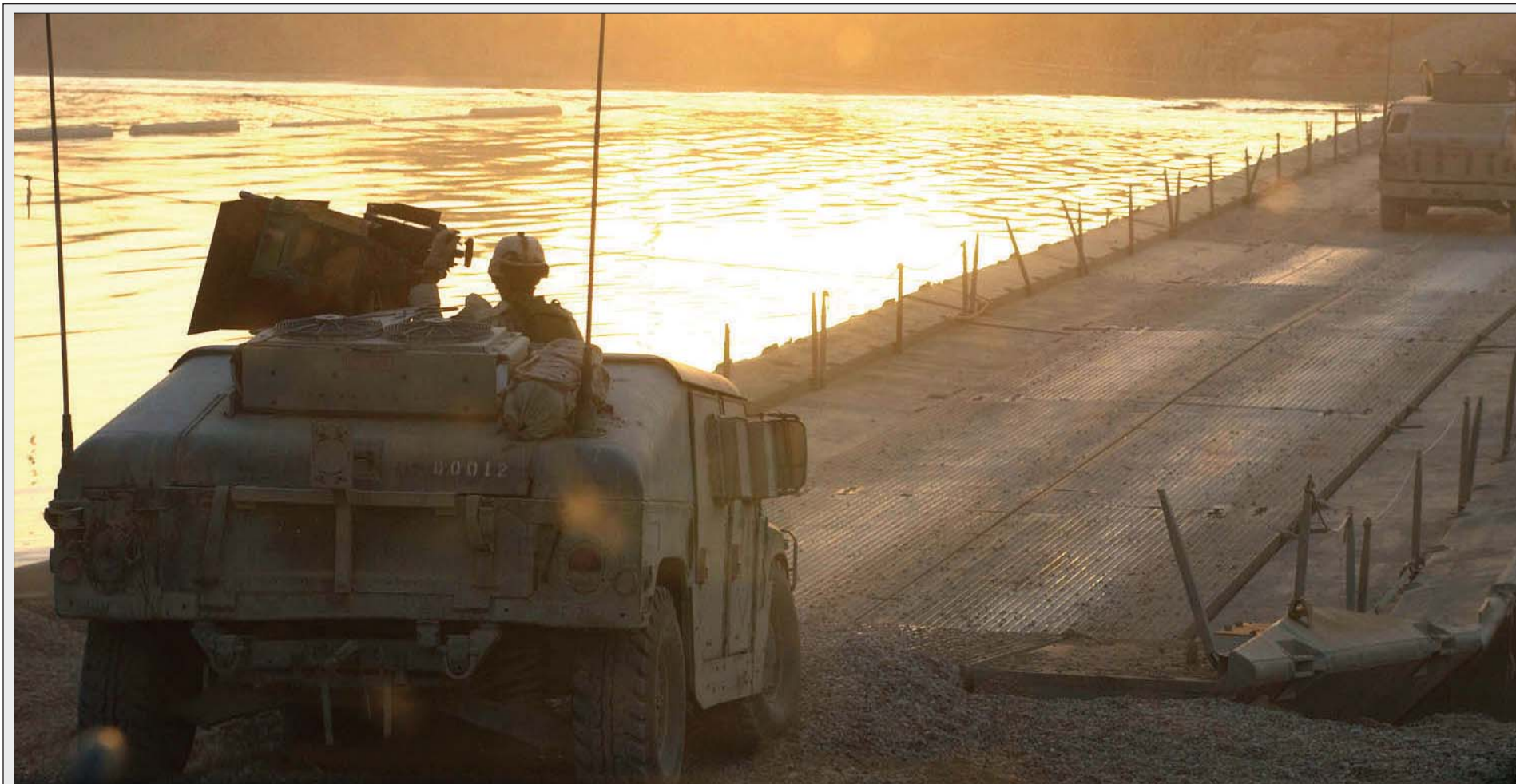


Cav Country

Volume 1, Issue 15

"Telling the First Team's Story"

Nov. 13, 2004



By Cpl. Benjamin Cossel, 122nd MPAD

First Team Troopers with Troop E, 3rd Battalion, 153rd Infantry Regiment, 39th Brigade Combat Team, cross an Engineer bridge spanning the Tigris River during an early morning raid that took them to the village of Husinaia Oct. 20. Troop E worked with members of the 307th Iraqi National Guard Battalion to search the village looking for weapons and individuals as insurgent activity in the area has increased recently.



By Spc. Al Barrus, 122nd MPAD

Soldiers of Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, move their tactical operations equipment to Camp Stryker and new work area, a tent less than half the size of their previous headquarters, from a concrete building beside a lake on Camp Liberty. The brigade made their final haul from their trailers on Camp Black Jack to Camp Stryker Oct. 23. Camp Stryker is a tent city three miles from their former home. In making the move, the 2nd BCT is making way for the 256th "Tiger" Brigade Combat Team; a Louisiana National Guard infantry brigade whose advance party recently arrived to Baghdad. While continuing operations from Camp Stryker, 2nd BCT will also conduct a right-seat-ride with the Tiger Brigade. For more on 2nd BCT's move to Camp Stryker see story, page 5.

1st Brigade Oversees ING's Al Thawra Weapons Buyback

By Spc. Jan Critchfield
122nd MPAD

CAMP HOPE, Iraq-- Soldiers of the 306th Iraqi National Guard Battalion, local Iraqi Police, and the 1st Cavalry Division's 1st Brigade Combat Team worked with local city leadership to facilitate a weapons buyback program as a part of continuing efforts to make life safer for the citizens of the Sadr City region.

Beginning Oct. 13, three locations in eastern Baghdad were designated by the Iraqi government as collection points where thousands of AK-47 assault rifles, anti-tank mines, rocket-propelled grenade launchers and other arms were collected through Oct. 22.

Anti-aircraft weapons and explosives commonly used in improvised explosive devices were also collected.

In return, those who turned weapons in were issued vouchers for cash payment of an amount based on the type of weapon that they turned in.

While the program was run completely by Iraqi security forces and the Iraqi government, Soldiers of the 1st Cavalry Division's 1st Brigade Combat Team were positioned several hundred meters away from the turn-in sites to provide additional security.

"Any weapons we can get off the street, is great," said 1st Lt. Lael Eason, a liaison

See Weapons, Page 4



By Spc. Jan Critchfield, 122nd MPAD

Thousands of AK-47 rifles were turned in to Iraqi National Guard Soldiers during a recent weapons buyback program held in Al Thawra.

Cultural Sensitivity Makes a Difference

By Staff Sgt. Susan German
122nd MPAD

In an environment where split-second decisions are a necessity, it is important to understand when something is not right. Being able to understand key phrases or using appropriate gestures may make a difference.

Being aware of cultural differences can help Soldiers take the appropriate action and demonstrate sensitivity to religious practices, especially during this holy month of Ramadan.

To assist in this endeavor, the 1st Cavalry Division's Civil Affairs Section (G5) conducted Iraqi cultural awareness sustainment training for the 458th Engineer Battalion Oct. 11-12, and will continue to train Soldiers throughout the division.

The training comes at a time when the division has reached the midway point in its deployment, when Soldiers are getting tired, some may be suffering from combat stress, having seen fellow Soldiers killed or wounded, Lt. Col. Rick Welch, the division's civil affairs officer, said.

The G5 section has been providing training since August. What makes this training unique is that a team of Iraqis provides the Arab perspective. The group was comprised of former military officers, professionals and college students who have an interest in talking about their culture in order to help Multi-National Forces operate more effectively in their culture.

During opening remarks, Brig. Gen. Michael Jones, assistant division commander for maneuver, 1st Cavalry Division, reminded Soldiers of the significance of the training.

Jones told the Soldiers that it was important for them to understand the role of the Army and their interaction with the Iraqi people, the role of women in Iraqi society and the concept of revenge; and how misunderstandings involving any of those components could lead to problems.

"How the population feels is fundamental to the success of our mission and a lot of how they feel depends on our behavior," Jones said. "So we have to modify our behavior to accommodate the fact that we're operating in an environment where people have a very different cultural perspective."

Jones also reminded Soldiers of the cross-cultural values involving dignity, honor and respect and how understanding these values will help increase force protection.

Soldiers learned that revenge is the underlying cause for many of the attacks launched against multinational forces.

"There are things we do that might cause someone to take revenge," Jones said. "We don't want our behavior, as innocent as it may be, to have a negative impact on the folks we're dealing with."

The cultural awareness training culminated in the realization that Soldiers are ambassadors for the United States, every time they interact with the local people.

Thankful for Camaraderie

Command Sgt. Maj. Neil Ciotola and I would like to take a few minutes to wish every Soldier, Airman, Sailor and Marine serving as a part of Task Force Baghdad an early Happy Thanksgiving. In less than two weeks, the American people will celebrate this most American of holidays.

Of course, in normal times, this is a holiday synonymous with friends, family and food. In fact, we don't think there is a greater family day than Thanksgiving.

This year's celebration can hold a very different, yet very special, place in your life. It will be a Thanksgiving unlike many that you have every celebrated or may ever again.

Here, we are celebrating together and we should be thankful for all that we are fighting for: our families, our country and our way of life. We're helping protect that way of life and allowing generations of Americans to share the magic of Thanksgiving at home.

We can be thankful for that.

We are planning special events and meals in each of our dining facilities to help remind us of the blessings of our nation. We should never take those blessings for granted. Command Sgt. Maj. Ciotola and I hope to get around and visit with many of you that day.

We believe that history will show our efforts here will bring greatness to Iraq. In this country of vast potential lies the heart of a nation yearning to build the foundation of free-

Pegasus 6 Sends

Maj. Gen. Peter Chiarelli



CG 1CD

dom and justice.

Each of you understands, and are thankful for, the precious nature of freedom and justice and you are providing a shining example of the greatness of our nation. Your efforts to improve the lives of Baghdad's citizens are doing more than you can know.

You may not see the improvements we seek during our deployment, but we are confident more Iraqis will associate the big horse patch with all that is good, and will be thankful in their own way.

Like most of you, I am thankful for my family and friends in the United States. But we can both say without hesitation, that we are thankful for each of you and for the privilege of sharing this special American holiday in your presence.

Thank you and God bless you.



Spur The Moment

Photos by Spc. Al Barrus 122nd MPAD

"What special plans do you have for when you get back home from Iraq?"

"I'm going to take my husband and my two kids on vacation anywhere outside of Texas."



SFC Leona Marshall
15th FSB

"I'm going to take a big long break and probably take a trip to Mexico."



2LT Peter Taczanowsky
358th Engineer Battalion

"When I get home for good, I'm going to Disney Land."



SPC Rayland Magallanes
2/162 Inf.

"I'm just going to get some rest: rest and relaxation. And, of course, see my family."



CWO Everett Stevens
HHC 13th Signal Battalion

"When I get back I'm going to pick up my new car that I bought while I was here, and just hang out with friends, and have some fun."



PVT Michael Hiney
4-5 ADA

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Timely Response Saves Lives

By Sgt. Dan Purcell
122nd MPAD

CAMP TAJI, Iraq-- Amidst the noise of incoming medical evacuation helicopters, calls for stretchers could be heard as multinational forces single-mindedly tended to the wounded and prepared them for transport back to Camp Taji for medical treatment.

Their helpful aid came quickly after anti-Iraqi forces launched an indiscriminate mortar attack on an Iraqi National Guard (ING) patrol base in northern Baghdad that killed six ING troops and wounded 38 more Oct. 19. The ING soldiers were from the 307th ING Battalion and were outside for their morning formation when the mortars first struck.

"Those people who attack Iraqis

everyday don't care who they kill," lamented one Iraqi at the scene of the attack. "If they had missed us they could have hit the primary school next door. Thank God the children didn't get hurt."

During the ensuing chaos, Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, who were nearby, immediately began to assess the damage, rendering first aid and calling for assistance.

Soldiers from Charlie Medical Company, 39th Support Battalion, 39th Brigade Combat Team and 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry (Oregon National Guard attached), responded immediately by providing life-saving first aid and casualty evacuation.

Preempting their original mission to go to a nearby Iraqi police station to train policemen in first aid, Capt. Demian San Miguel, commander of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Regiment, volunteered to assist in the casualty evacuation.

"We were getting ready to go out and do our mission, which is to train and mentor local Iraqi policemen, when I heard from battalion that the forward operating base was under attack, so I got my Soldiers ready and went up to the Tactical Operating Center to see how we could assist," San Miguel explained.

Charged with providing convoy security for Charlie Medical Company, Soldiers of the 2-162 played a pivotal Spc. Ryan Miller (left), a medic, 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Regiment, provides life-saving first aid to a wounded Iraqi National Guardsman in the aftermath of a mortar attack on an ING patrol base north of Baghdad.

Troops evacuate wounded Iraqi National Guardsmen (below), following an early morning mortar attack on a patrol base in northern Baghdad Oct. 19.



Soldiers evacuate Iraqi National Guardsmen wounded during an Oct. 19 mortar attack by anti-Iraqi forces on an ING patrol base north of Baghdad. The wounded were transported to nearby Camp Taji for medical treatment.

role in treating the wounded and securing the casualty evacuation.

"As soon as we got there, our medic and all our combat lifesavers secured their rifles and began the process of helping with bandaging the wounded and transporting stretchers," San Miguel said. "I didn't have to say anything, they all grabbed their bags and went to work triaging and assessing and bandaging those in need. We even got our translators involved to help interpret the needs of the injured ING.

"The ING are fighting for their country and the way I look at it, they are just like any American Soldier...fighting for a free Iraq, which is why my Soldiers took it very seriously when they heard the ING needed assistance and were there to support them 100 percent," San Miguel said.

"When I first heard what happened I thought it was a bad joke, but when we got there and I saw what had happened, I immediately started checking the bandaged wounds of ING personnel that didn't have an attendant with them, and the only thing that goes through your head is the training," Sgt. Andrew Morey, a member of 2-162 Infantry, remembered.

"Looking back at what I saw, the first thing that came to mind was figuring out where to start and the extent of the injuries," said Spc. Ryan Miller, a medic with 2-162. "Ultimately, it all falls back on training. You don't really think about it, you just act on what you know."

San Miguel said after the casualties had been safely evacuated he went with his men to the IP station to explain why the first aid training was postponed.

"They said they understood, expressing their concern for what happened to the ING," San Miguel said. "It was good to see that the IPs were concerned about the ING, because it shows that there is a professional relationship starting to build between the two security forces."



Photos by Sgt. Dan Purcell, 122nd MPAD



Weapons Buyback was Mixed Success

Weapons, from page 1

officer with the 306th Iraqi National Guard Battalion. "We haven't received [an incoming] mortar here in... I'd say two weeks. I'm not sure why that is, if it's the weapon buyback program or ... the political things that are going on."

Eason noted that there had been a large quantity of mortars turned in during the buyback program.

"What we've seen are a lot of 60-millimeter mortars with the base plate and also [122 millimeter mortars]," he said.

Regardless of the reason, Soldiers at Camp Hope have experienced a period of relative calm since the program started.

"The weapons buyback program is the result of an initiative by Muqtada [al-Sadr's] militia to disarm and disband," said 1st Brigade Combat Team spokesman Capt. Brian O'Malley. "The Iraqi government is running the weapons buyback to support the initiative taken by the militia."

Although the impressive quantities of weapons and explosives recovered made the program a great success, O'Malley said the numbers of mines used to make improvised explosive devices as well as heavy weapons that are known to be in the possession of

the militia were not as high as would have been expected if the militia was completely disarmed.

"[The program] has done fairly well in some weapons categories; we've gotten the thousands of weapons that we expected to see. In other weapons categories, we have not; particularly IEDs," O'Malley said. "[If the militia] truly want to disarm and disband, ... they'd pull up all the IEDs ... because right now, the streets of Sadr City, for all intents and purposes, are a minefield."

O'Malley said that based on independent surveys conducted in the area, the majority of people in eastern Baghdad want the fighting there to stop. He said if hostilities cease, his brigade could begin restoring essential services to the area.

"We are still cautiously optimistic," O'Malley said. "If there's no violence, we are going in and setting up [infrastructure] projects, all over Sadr City."

1st BCT, alongside various Baghdad municipalities, has already organized several hundred thousand dollars in infrastructure projects in the southern half of Sadr City, where security is better.

O'Malley said projects estimated at over one hundred million dollars are planned if the area remains stable.



Photos by Spc. Jan Critchfield, 122nd MPAD

A truckload of weapons (above), waits to be counted during the weapons buyback program in eastern Baghdad. The program lasted from Oct. 13 through Oct. 22 and netted thousands of AK-47 assault rifles, anti-tank mines, rocket-propelled grenade launchers and other arms.

Soldiers of the 306th Iraqi National Guard Battalion (right), unload one of hundreds of 155-millimeter artillery shells to be disposed of during the buyback. Anti-Iraqi forces commonly use these shells to make improvised explosive devices.



Seedy Operation Aimed at eastern Baghdad Farmers

**By 2nd Lt. Lars Larson
1-82 Field Artillery**

BAGHDAD, Iraq-- How can you tell if a truck is overloaded? For Soldiers of A and B Batteries, 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment of the 1st Cavalry Division's 1st Brigade Combat Team, the answer is simple: it won't move.

For more than a week, Soldiers of 1-82 FA distributed 120 metric tons of wheat, 70 tons of barley and 175 tons of fertilizers to the farmers of eastern Baghdad. The grateful farmers carried away their seed and fertilizer, which came in 110-pound bags, but not without occasional assistance.

"There were times when the Soldiers had to push [the farmers'] pick-up trucks to get them going on their way," said Russellville, S.C. native Staff Sgt. Kevin Bowens of Battery B, 1-82 FA.

The seed delivery in east Baghdad was a part of Operation Amber Waves, a city-wide civil military operation aimed at agriculture stabilization in the region leading

up to the fall planting season.

Civil affairs officers in the region helped to establish a farmer's cooperative with the help of local sheiks prior to the seed and fertilizer delivery. Farmers taking part in Operation Amber Waves also received a "United Farmers of Iraq" shirt. But the goal of the program has much loftier long-term goals.

"Handing out free seed and shirts is just the first step," said St. Petersburg, Fla. native Capt. William Powers, the battalion's civil affairs officer. "We are currently in the process of building a farmer's co-op facility that will have a large meeting room, a soil and water laboratory and a large warehouse to store equipment and supplies."

Powers said he has been working closely with the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture to acquire farm equipment, such as combines and tractors, for the farmer's cooperative. The long-term success of the program is seen as a key element to economic recovery in the area.



Courtesy of 1st Brigade Combat Team

Iraqi farmers in eastern Baghdad pick-up seed and fertilizer from Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment of the 1st Cavalry Division's 1st Brigade Combat Team Oct. 15. The seed and fertilizer distribution was part of a citywide civil military program called Operation Amber Waves, aimed at assisting area farmers heading into the fall planting season. 1-82 FA delivered 365 metric tons of seed and fertilizer to eastern Baghdad farmers from Oct. 7 through Oct. 15.



By Staff Sgt. Susan German, 122nd MPAD

Capt. Roberto Marin (left), a senior brigade physician's assistant with the 15th Forward Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, describes a common knee injury to Spc. Maximo Sebastian, with the ambulance team, Company E, 15th FSB, during weekly medic training by 2BCT medical staff.

"Trauma Dog" Maintaining Training for the Front Line

By Staff Sgt. Susan German
122nd MPAD

CAMP BLACK JACK, Iraq-- Injuries are an all too common consequence of life in a combat zone, but peace of mind can come from knowing the medical personnel that take care of you are trained professionals.

Medics from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, are assisted in that process by a training program instituted by the 2BCT staff.

Once a week, medics from the 2BCT gather at the brigade's troop medical clinic (TMC), dubbed "Trauma Rock", for a lively session on common ailments afflicting Soldiers from the 1st Cavalry Division.

Capt. Roberto Marin, aka "Trauma Dog," the senior brigade physician assistant (PA), 15th Forward Support Battalion (FSB), leads the weekly meetings. His goal is to help the medics improve their patient physical assessment and examination skills in order to assist the doctors or PAs in making their diagnoses. This helps keep medics' skills up-to-date and keeps them ready to work, while at the same time building their self-esteem, Marin explained.

Prior to his deployment with the 1st Cav. Div., Marin worked at the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine (USACHPPM) at the Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland and specializes in family practice.

"I like teaching and I like training the medics and I like the visual and hands on," Marin said. "Maybe that's why I got into the field. [It's] awesome when you see the medics eyes light up."

Using PowerPoint slides, anatomy charts, videos and a "patient," a fellow medic, for hands on evaluation, Marin's energy and enthusiasm keep learning interesting and fun. Medics are given scenarios and expected to come up with preliminary diagnoses in order to brief the doctor, helping them reinforce their evaluation skills.

This training will also help them determine which tests need to be run and whether or not x-rays are necessary in real-life situations, Marin said.

Classes have covered a wide variety of topics including headaches, social work and dental examinations. Doctors and PAs also take advantage of incoming patients' symptoms to provide teaching experiences for the medics.

One of the most common non-traumatic complaints, besides lower back pain, that medical personnel at the TMC are seeing is knee pain, usually due to sports injuries or vehicle accidents, Marin said.

To maintain an active posture in the military, Soldiers do physical training even while deployed, Marin explained. When they experience pain, they come in and we teach them how to prevent injuries through physical therapy, Marin continued.

"We're out there for the Soldiers in the front line," Marin added. "That's where physician assistants work. From the line, for the line."

Move Over Black Jack Brigade, the 256th Tiger Brigade is on its Way

By Spc. Al Barrus
122nd MPAD

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq-- The Soldiers of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, had hoped to be on their way back to Fort Hood, Texas, by the end of October. But it was announced Oct. 4 that the unit, which arrived here in January, will fulfill a full 12-month tour.

The brigade made their final haul from their trailers on Camp Black Jack to Camp Striker Oct. 23, a tent city three miles from their former home. At Striker, the brigade will continue operations.

In doing this, they make way for the 256th "Tiger" Brigade Combat Team; a Louisiana National Guard infantry brigade whose advance party recently arrived.

As Black Jack moves from their homes of over nine months and into much different facilities, they still must stay mission capable. To do this, all the battalions moved their headquarters first, and then the brigade headquarters followed.

"Here in the fire support element, we will continue our fire support mission at Stryker," said Sgt. 1st Class Donald Jefferson, the 2nd BCT's fire support non-commissioned officer in charge. "We will just have a smaller area to work out of."

If getting moved to a different location and taking on a new area of responsibility isn't enough, the Blackjacks are also passing on their old area of operations to a brigade which is just arriving in Iraq.

"The new group is eager to learn and they ask a lot of questions and they are learning a lot. There are a lot of historical events we witnessed and we have been telling them about those," Jefferson, the Henderson, N.C., native said. "You can do all the training back home that you want, but when you get here, nothing can prepare you for what you will see."

Introducing a fresh group to a new area also reminds the Black Jack brigade members of how they were when they first arrived in Iraq, and how far they have come in their time here.

"[The 256th BCT] seems to be asking pretty simple questions, and it seems like it wasn't long ago we were asking the same questions," the sergeant major said. "There's a lot of equipment we have gotten used to, but it's very foreign to them, but we are helping them, and they are staying motivating."

As the sun seems to be setting on 2nd Brigade's time in Iraq, their Soldiers are staying mission focused.

"I don't even think about when I'm going home," said Spc. Leland Lavoie, a radar technician in Headquarters Company, 2nd BCT. "I just focus on what's here and try not to get my hopes up too much. I just hope someday they will tell me I'm going home tomorrow."

Having put so much effort into their missions and operations, it will be a bitter-sweet feeling once the troops finally do make that trek back to Texas.

"It's a mix of feelings, but I'm sure the 256th will do a great job," said Sgt. Major Rick Purden, the operations sergeant major for the 2nd BCT.



By Spc. Al Barrus, 122nd MPAD

Staff Sgt. Charles Davis, a fire support sergeant in the Black Jack brigade headquarters, disassembles communication antennas on the roof of the old tactical operations center. The antennas will be set up at a new location on Camp Stryker, as his brigade checks out of Camp Liberty.

Injured Iraqi Interpreter Given a Leg Up on Life

By Spc. Al Barrus
122nd MPAD

BAGHDAD, Iraq-- Interpreters are essential to Operation Iraqi Freedom, and in the combat zone that is Baghdad, they take the same risks, sometimes more, than the Soldiers they work alongside.

This is a fact that is all too true for Haydar Kharalla who now walks with crutches. He was an interpreter and the voice for the Soldiers in Company C, 1st Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment of the 82nd Airborne Division, who called him "Homeboy."

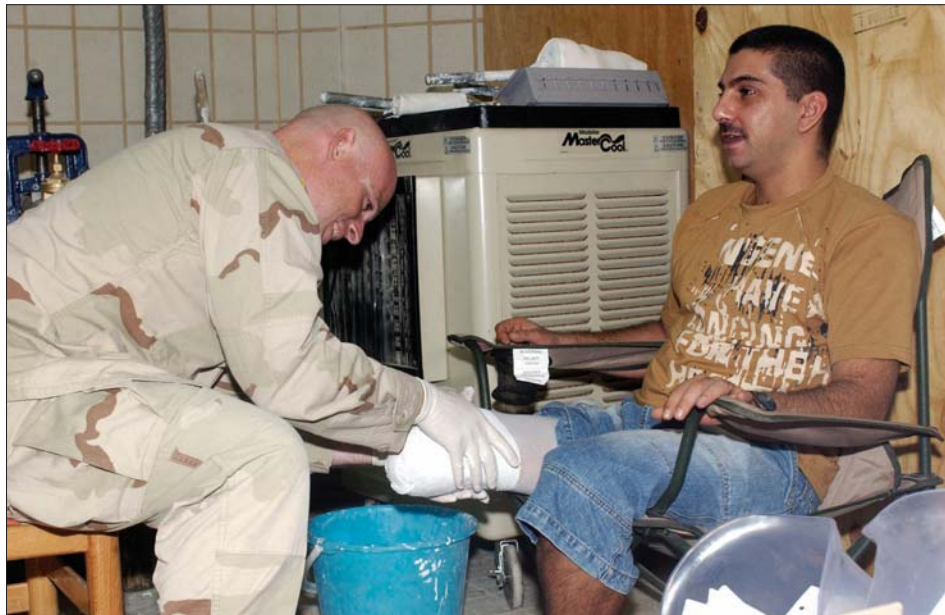
He is now missing his right leg below the knee.

His story of loss took place in the Abu Dashir neighborhood in southern Baghdad on Aug. 6, 2003.

"Back then, there was a curfew at 11 p.m., and we would go on missions at that time," Kharalla recalled. "There was a car driving around past the curfew, so the Soldiers investigated and got out to speak. Then all the sudden we were taking fire, and the Soldiers returned some."

In the midst of the battle, a bullet struck his leg, and he felt a sting. He ducked down next to his humvee as a barrage of bullets and some rocket-propelled grenades pummeled the convoy.

His friend, a paratrooper, lay out in the open. Kharalla took grip of the trooper's body armor to pull him to safety. While blood poured heavily out of his right leg, Kharalla found there was no life in his friend's body. It was then he noticed that another bullet had pierced his left leg.



By Spc. Al Barrus, 122nd MPAD

Capt. Steve Lindsley of 112th Military Police Battalion makes a plaster cast to serve as a prosthetic mold on Haydar Kharalla's stump. Kharalla lost his leg during a combat operation while serving as an interpreter for the 82nd Airborne Division in August 2003.

The next thing he knew, he was in a humvee on the way to a hospital.

Army medical personnel salvaged Kharalla's left leg, which now bears a scar. The right leg was infected by gangrene, and amputation below the knee was necessary.

After a month in the hospital, he was able to return home, but unable to carry his son who is now 16 months old. Kharalla believes he can walk again with the help of a prosthetic leg, but had been unable to find help.

Over a year of asking his employer, Titan Corp., for assistance, as well as

many other organizations, Kharalla began to lose hope of ever getting a new leg.

Kharalla began to worry that his hope to walk again was a lost cause. Then his story ran in "Stars and Stripes" where the local troops could read about it.

"I read the article and thought 'Why can't we help this guy?'" said Capt. Rob Edwards, an intelligence officer for 112th Military Police Battalion, who helps make prosthetics for disabled Iraqis. "We just needed to find this guy and bring him here [to the International Zone]."

With the help of 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 5th Brigade Combat

Team of the 1st Cavalry Division, Kharalla got a ride from his home in southern Baghdad to the division's 3rd Brigade Combat Team headquarters downtown.

Edwards helps out in making the prosthetics alongside Sgt. Chris Cummings of the 443rd Civil Affairs Battalion, who is a prosthetic and orthodontics technician as a civilian, and Capt. Steve Lindsley, of the 112th MPs, who is a prosthetic practitioner when not in uniform.

Lindsley has been helping making prosthetics for disabled Iraqis for most of his time in Iraq, and has always been flooded with requests. Edwards assists when he's not bogged down with his duties as an intelligence officer.

"After I read the article I showed it to Capt. Lindsley and he said to bring him on in," Edwards added. "We are helping out anyone who needs a new leg or arm, and after what [Kharalla] did for our Soldiers, we put him at the top of the list."

Kharalla made his first of many appointments Oct. 13. In a few weeks time, he will have his new leg, after which he can start physical therapy to walk with two feet once again.

"I think this new leg will help recover a part of my life," Kharalla said. "It can't be anything like the real leg, but something is better than nothing."

"Soldiers are always thanking me for my sacrifice, but I will always be in debt to America," he added. "You freed me and my country; you liberated us, and for that I will always be thankful."

USO Tour Gives Troops a Big "Danke Schoen"

By Sgt. John Queen
3rd BCT Public Affairs

BAGHDAD, Iraq-- Hundreds of 1st Cavalry Division troopers in Baghdad received a special visit from "Mr. Las Vegas" himself, Wayne Newton, during his USO variety tour in the Middle East.

Newton, along with special guests actor Rob Schneider, country singer Neal McCoy, Hispanic television celebrity Myrka Dellanos, dance duo the McFadden Brothers and vocalist Jenevi Bakch spent nearly three hours at this base camp in central Baghdad Oct. 19. They took the time to talk with the troops, sign autographs, pose for pictures and share a far-from-home-cooked meal at the base camp's dining facility.

The celebrities' enthusiasm to meet the troops was more than apparent as they eagerly grabbed the hands of every Soldier they met, giving them a lasting shake, which usually ended in a warm old-buddy-type of hug.

"All the stars seemed very personable," said Capt. Larry Edell, 3rd

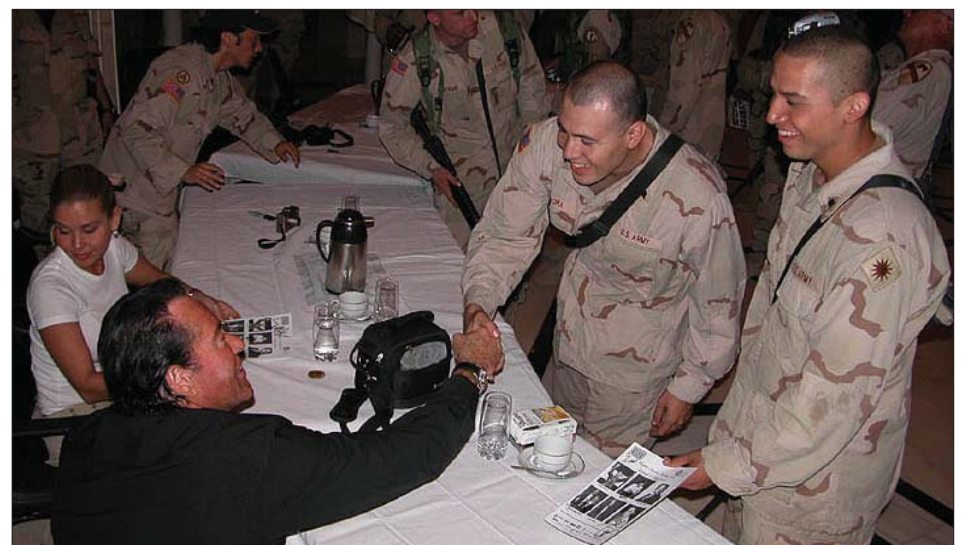
Brigade Combat Team's trial council officer. "They really enjoyed talking to the soldiers."

They enjoyed being with the Soldiers so much that Newton and Schneider were constantly being told by the tour promoters and escorts to hurry signing their autographs because their friendliness was slowing up the line of troops waiting to meet them.

"This is a small thing that I could do, to make them (the Soldiers) laugh and just say, 'Hi,' and let them know America is behind them and we love them and hurry up and get home," Schneider said. "In my career, I've done a lot of different things, television, movies, been all over the world - I get more out of performing for the troops than anything else."

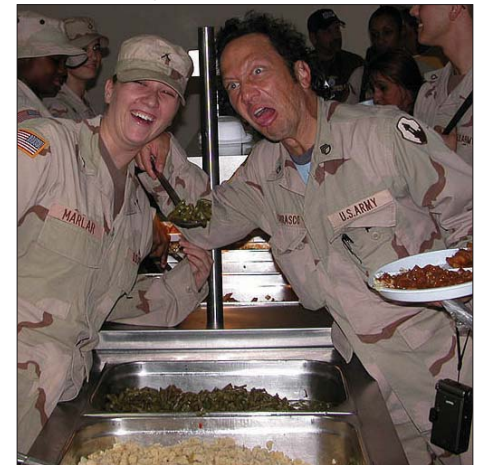
Newton became the chairman of the USO Celebrity Circle in 2001, filling the shoes of the late USO icon, comedian Bob Hope.

All of Newton's guests on the tour are volunteers and not paid for any of their performances. They either ask to participate in the program or are invited.



Photos by Sgt. John Queen, 3rd BCT Public Affairs

"Mr. Las Vegas," Wayne Newton (above), put a smile on the faces of members of the 1st Cavalry Division's 3rd Brigade Combat Team as he shakes hands during a visit to Forward Operating Base Union I in Baghdad's International Zone Oct. 19. "Is it green beans, macaroni and cheese or some kind of meat?" Actor Rob Schneider (right), jokes with Pvt. Alissa Marla as she tries to serve lunch during a visit from USO tour members at a Camp Union I dining facility in Baghdad's International Zone Oct. 19.



Apache Pilots Make Daring Rescue

By Cpl. Benjamin Cossel
122nd MPAD

CAMP TAJI, Iraq-- For two Apache Longbow pilots, the night of Oct. 16 was just a regular night flying a reconnaissance mission around southern Baghdad. A distorted cry for help came across the emergency radio shattering the chatter of all other communications. They recognized the call sign, they recognized the area and a few minutes later, they were enroute to perform what would become a heroic rescue.

"We're in zone 43...." came a weak transmission over the radio.

"I recognized the area and immediately made the decision that we were going to break from our sector and go over to the area," said Lebanon, N.H. native Capt. Ryan Welch, the air mission commander. "Those were our guys on the ground and we had to help."

Over the radio a wounded pilot had explained the previous pilot was unable to respond, that two pilots were killed in action and that he and the other survivor were trying to make their way to a defensible position, but were having difficulty as one of the wounded was unable to walk.

"When we flew over the sector, we immediately picked up the heat signature of a burning fire," said Welch.

"You just flew over our position," the transmission informed.

"Once we had identified the crew on the ground, I made the call that we were going to land and get those pilots out of there," Welch commented. "I had no idea of the situation on the ground... and told [his co-pilot] if he started taking fire...[to] leave

me and...collect all of us later."

Welch had landed his Apache approximately 100 meters from the crash site, armed with his 9mm and an M4 Carbine rifle he set out to collect the downed pilots.

"As I came up on them, I noticed they looked pretty bad, multiple cuts on their face and both looked like the early stages of shock had set in. I called out to Beck (Chief Warrant Officer Chad Beck, 1st Battalion of the 25th Aviation Regiment, 25th Infantry Division, attached to the 4th BCT) who was standing, to get him to help me with Mr. Crow (Chief Warrant Officer Greg Crow, also of 1-25 Aviation)."

Carrying two wounded back over the treacherous 100 meters to his waiting Apache, Welch said the time seemed to slow down to an absolute crawl. They inched their way back, working carefully not to further injure Mr. Crow.

Four personnel, two seats in the Apache. Self-extraction was a maneuver the pilots had been told about in flight school. A maneuver considered dangerous enough that no practical application was given, just the verbal "Here's how you do it"

Hanging from a pilot's flight vest is a nylon strap attached to a carbineer. On each side of the Apache, hand holds are bolted on, primarily to assist maintenance crews as they work on the birds. They also have another purpose, to be used in the event of a self extraction. The general idea being a pilot attaches to the side of the helicopter with the nylon strap wrapped through the hand holds connecting the nylon strap with the carbineer, and then flies off to a safe location.

"I knew getting back to my bird,"



By Cpl. Benjamin Cossel, 122nd MPAD

Capt. Ryan Welch (left), an AH-64D Apache helicopter pilot, sits with his gunner Chief Warrant Officer Justin Taylor.

explained Welch, "that Mr. Crow was in no position for self extraction that I would have to put him in the front seat. I radioed to JT and told him what I intended to do, Crow in the front seat, Beck and I strapped to the outside."

"It kind of surprised me at first and then I just thought, 'Cool, that's what we're going to do,'" said Welch's co-pilot Lodi, Ca native Chief Warrant Officer Justin Taylor.

Secured and assuming a defensive posture with his rifle, Welch gave Taylor the thumbs up sign and the Apache lifted off.

"I was a little bit freaked out," explained Taylor, "you just don't fly an Apache by yourself, it's definitely a two man aircraft"

At 90 miles per hour the two helicopters flew 20 kilometers to Forward Operating Base (FOB) Falcon, the closest FOB with a Combat Support Hospital (CSH).

"I only had my night visor on," said Welch. "I thought my eyes were going to rip out my sockets and that my nose would tear from my face, the wind was so strong."

Landing on the emergency pad, Welch and Taylor jumped out and helped medical personnel take Beck and Crow inside for treatment.

"One of the medics asked me if I was a medical flight pilot," chuckled Welch. "You should have seen the look on his face when I told him, Nope, I'm an Apache pilot."

One Job, Multiple Roles

By Sgt. Dan Purcell
122nd MPAD

CAMP TAJI, Iraq-- What can be said for one, can probably be said for all. A love for flying keeps them going, 12-hour shifts (or more), 24-hours-a-day, seven days a week, providing critical transport and cover for the troops on the ground. Who are these iron men of the aviation corps?

The crew chiefs of 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, are the middlemen in the battle to keep the battalion's Blackhawks airborne. These Soldiers help maintain the 'birds,' that facilitate the transport of troops, while covering down on the pilots.

For two such crew chiefs, Spc. Brandon Arther and Spc. Dmitri Schornick from the Company A 'Werewolves', 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, they are their best skirting above the ground at 120 miles-an-hour, and eyeing the ground below for potential threats.

"Flying is like an extra duty because our primary mission is to ensure the helicopter is properly maintained at all times," explained Schornick, a native of Bay St. Louis, Miss. "We are part of a team that runs two 12-hour shifts, give or take, depending on

mission requirements, all week with every ninth or tenth day for down time."

Arther noted whether flying at night or during the day, the hours are long.

"Usually, we start getting ready about two hours before our first scheduled mission. During this time we perform the necessary pre-flight aircraft inspections, topping off fluids and logging discrepancies," said Arther, a native of Roswell, N.M. "When we have completed all that, then we mount our guns. There's a whole process before we go anywhere."

Anywhere might include flying to Fallujah with stops at several forward operating bases along the way. 'Add on' missions offer unexpected detours, in-flight reenlistment ceremonies and extra hours in the air.

At the end of each successful day, once again, the crew chiefs routinely inspect their craft.

"It's called a '10-14' inspection. For every 10 hours of flight time or every 14 days, we inspect the helicopters," Arther explained. "In the states, we average about 10 hours every two weeks, but here we fly considerably more hours in a shorter period of time."

"These guys are real heroes, but they don't get a lot of recognition for what they do," said Sgt.



Spc. Dmitri Schornick, a Blackhawk crew chief with the A Company 'Werewolves', 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, climbs up the tail of his helicopter to check for loose screws during a post-mission inspection.

1st Class Russell Kirby, company first sergeant, Company A, 2-227th Aviation. "We are one of the few units that are in full operation around the clock, running multiple missions plus 'add ons.' And there are always 'add ons.'"



Photos by Sgt. Dan Purcell, 122nd MPAD

Spc. Brandon Arther, a Blackhawk crew chief, Company A 'Werewolves', 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, scans the ground below for possible enemy activity and attacks on the aircraft.



The sun shines down on Staff Sgt. Nathaniel Reeves (above), Company B, 980th Engineer Battalion, as he trims and smooths out the rough edges of the wet cement, which will make removing the wooden forms easier after the cement dries.

Sgt. Hector Martinez (above left), Company B, 980th Engineer Battalion, puts a brush to a freshly poured pad of concrete at Camp Taji.

980th Heavy Engineers: Laying New Ground in Taji

By Sgt. Dan Purcell
122nd MPAD

CAMP TAJI, Iraq-- Back home, their civilian occupations are as varied as the states they come from, but they all have one thing in common: they all know how to push cement.

Currently, Soldiers of the 980th Engineer Battalion (Combat Heavy) attached to the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, are laying the foundation for an airfield expansion at Camp Taji.

The 980th is a reserve battalion headquartered in Austin, Texas with subordinate units in San Antonio and Seagoville. It is comprised of citizen Soldiers from all walks of life representing a multitude of midwestern, southwestern and northeastern states.

"We are the guys between the combat engineers who are pushing stuff out of the way and the more permanent type of construction performed by the Corps of Engineers," Maj. Gary Law, the battalion's operations officer, said. "We can support the combat guys if necessary but we also have the skills to support." Alberto Bello (left), Company B, 980th Engineer Battalion, ties off the rebar grid for the concrete pad.

port long-term construction projects. We are the transition people."

Compared to previous projects, Law cited that their current mission is by far the largest since they were deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II.

"Our mission is to construct an expansion apron and we will be pouring in the neighbor of 40 acres of concrete," Law said. "The project includes building demolition, grading, concrete placement and apron construction."

To complete this mission in a timely manner, Soldiers from both Bravo and Charlie Companies are putting in long days.

"Our Soldiers put in 12-hour days, six days a week, and on the seventh day we conduct readiness training and equipment maintenance, with only one in 14 days off," Law said.

Sgt. Bradley Zanville, the project's noncommissioned officer in charge for Bravo Company and a native of Parkersburg, W. Va., said working on the expansion is no easy task considering that it must be pieced together one pad at a time.

"We pretty much do it all from start to finish," he said. "And while our company is working half the expansion project, Charlie Company is working the other half," Zanville added.





Soldiers (above), of Company B, 980th Engineer Battalion, prepare a concrete pad form for the airfield expansion project at Camp Taji.



Photos by Sgt. Dan Purcell, 122nd MPAD

Soldiers of Company B, 980th Engineer Battalion (Combat Heavy (above)), headquartered in Austin, Texas, and attached to the 1st Cavalry Division's 4th Brigade Combat Team, work quickly to lay the wet cement before it dries. The Soldiers are planning to lay over 50,000 cubic feet of cement for a new airfield at Camp Taji.

"This mission pretty much dictates our lives here. And we're in it until it's done," he said. "We have a good team here with a good attitude."

"When the project is complete we will have poured over 50,000 cubic feet of cement," noted Staff Sgt. Donna Strickland, a project inspector with the 980th's Headquarters Support Company. "So far, the project is looking great and these guys are doing an awesome job."

In addition to pouring concrete, these multifaceted Soldiers' duties are far-ranging and include tower duty and perimeter security.

"There are quite a few other projects going on

here," Law said. "We are supporting all the building renovations with quality control, constructing 1.6 kilometers of road, and we have supported the 39th Brigade in their Abu Nuwas mission as well as various other units within Task Force Baghdad."

"We are real proud of our Soldiers. There have not been any significant injuries or accidents, we are meeting our schedules [and] the quality of workmanship is excellent," Law added. "These are guys, who one day were just doing their jobs back home and then they all come together here to do a job. To me, they represent the ultimate in the citizen warrior and volunteer."



Sgt. Jennifer Villegas (above), Company B, 980th Engineer Battalion, helps lay a rebar grid in preparation for constructing another pad for the airfield expansion.

Red Team

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3,000 Homes Searched in Red Team Op.

By Cpl. Bill Putnam
122nd MPAD

AL RASHID, Iraq-- Soldiers from two of the 1st Cavalry Division's Brigade Combat Teams shut down a restive neighborhood in Baghdad's Al Rashid District Oct. 9.

Long planned and delayed a few times, Operation Diamond Cutter's mission was simple: to shut down the Abu Dasher neighborhood of southern Baghdad to find insurgents responsible for planting improvised explosive devices, numerous murders of local nationals working for the 1st Cav. Div. and shelling nearby Camp Falcon, 5th BCT officials said.

The mission by all accounts was successful. Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 21st Field Artillery Regiment, and the Iraqi National Guard's 304th Battalion shut down all roads leading in and out of the area. The 10th Mountain Division's 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, attached to the 5th BCT for the operation, searched the eastern half of the neighborhood, while the 5th BCT's 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, searched the western half.

The two battalions found almost 50 rifles and AK-47s, three hand-grenades, one Rocket Propelled Grenade launcher, and detained seven suspected insurgents.

"We're here to show the people of Abu Dasheer we can shut this neighborhood down whenever we want," said Staff Sgt. Riley Flaherty, a squad leader in Company C, 1-8 Cav, during the search.

Around him, search teams were searching homes for weapons and material tying the residents to the Mahdi Militia, the now-disbanded militia of the firebrand cleric Muqtada al-Sadr.

The two battalions searched almost 3,000 homes and businesses in the area that day. It was the longest and largest search conducted by the 5th BCT to date, said Spc. Leonard Cottrell.

"Usually, when we do searches, they're a lot shorter and quicker," he explained.

"This is a big mission, my platoon is searching almost 300 homes alone," said Pfc. Barry Smith, a tanker in Company C, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment.

The massive operation started early Oct. 9. Soldiers from 1-21 FA and the 304th ING set up check points on roads leading into the search area. The actual searching started around 5:30 a.m. and lasted all day.

"There they are," Cottrell said, as his convoy passed Soldiers from 1-21 FA and the ING's 304th, who were manning a checkpoint at 5 a.m. "Those guys have it rough, man, they've been out here since 2 a.m."

The locals, though, didn't seem to understand the magnitude of the search. As the search kicked off, Soldiers stopped and searched people driving their cars.

"Hey, tell those guys to go home," 1st Lt. Kevin Harper, a platoon leader in Cobra, 1-8 Cav., told his platoon's interpreter. "It's an American holiday for them. No one's going anywhere today."

By 8:45 a.m., the two battalions started



By Cpl. Bill Putnam, 122nd MPAD

Local kids ask for more candy from Staff Sgt. Riley Flaherty, a squad leader with 1-8 Cav., and 1st Lt. Kevin Harper, a platoon leader with 1-8 Cav., as his friends lunge for more during Operation Diamond Cutter Oct. 9.

finding weapons and detaining suspects. Bandit Company, 1-8 Cav., found three hand grenades in one home, and Archangel, 1-8 Cav., found three artillery shells near a traffic circle on a major road leading into the neighborhood. Four insurgents had also been detained.

By that time, as well, people, mostly men, boys and small girls, started to sit outside and watch the on-going search.

As time went on, people started opening their doors and bringing weapons out on their own.

"Looks like they were expecting us,"

Cottrell said. The house was pretty much empty, as most are here, and the search team left quickly.

Twelve hours after they started, the Soldiers wrapped up Operation Diamond Cutter. They did find one thing good about the day: clouds hid the sun and kept temperatures cool.

"At least it's not July," both Smith and Cottrell said. The battalion conducted a big search mission in mid-July. Temperatures that day reached 140 degrees Fahrenheit. The temperature the day of Diamond Cutter reached around 100 degrees.

1-8 Cav. Makes Big Find in southern Baghdad

By Spc. Al Barrus
122nd MPAD

BAGHDAD, Iraq-- In order to prevent anti-Iraqi attacks during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, all companies of 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 5th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, along with elements in the 2nd Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment, conducted a large scale cordon and search in the southern outskirts of Baghdad Oct. 14.

A significant weapons cache was found in the Marine sector in the southern-most portion of the operation, according to Capt. Rodney Schmucker, 1-8 Cav., planning officer. There Soldiers and Marines found ten 500-pound bombs, 100 mortar rounds, seven rocket-propelled grenades, and a sundry of small arms and other explosives.

Forty individuals were detained during the raid. Many of the 18 intended target individuals were found, while others were primarily taken into custody for questioning, Schmucker said.

The 12-hour operation spanned over five cordoned sections within a 15 kilometer area along the Tigris River. The mission, named Operation Mustang Socko, sought



Photo courtesy of 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment
Roughly 100 mortar rounds were found during Operation Mustang Socko. terrorists and weapons in this rural sector, mainly populated by members of the former regime.

It's important to stay offensive, according to Schmucker.

"We need to be offensive and go after these guys," he said. "This operation may even have negative repercussions, but you can't just sit back and say 'We won't bother you, if you don't bother us.' It doesn't work that way."



Photos courtesy of 5th Brigade Combat Team

Iraqi students parade their new backpacks. The backpacks were delivered to children of the Al Shumoos and Al Oyoos schools in southern Baghdad by members of the 1st Battalion, 21st Field Artillery Regiment of the 1st Cavalry Division's 5th Brigade Combat Team. The brigade has delivered more than 14,000 backpacks to Iraqi school children.



39th Nabs Recruiter, Mortar Cell Leader

**Staff Sgt. Rebekah-mae
Bruns
39th BCT Public Affairs**

CAMP TAJI, Iraq-- A mid-day raid launched by Company C, 3rd Battalion, 153rd Infantry Regiment of the 39th Brigade Combat Team, netted a suspected cell leader and recruiter for anti-Iraqi mortar teams in eastern Baghdad.

The company claims the

individual was the brains behind nearly 200 mortars targeting their one-and-a-half-acre compound since their arrival in Baghdad in April.

Platoon Sgt. Robert Fisher, 37, of Carlisle, Ark., said the man was difficult to find because he frequently moved to avoid capture.

"He had several places he lived," said Fisher. "He didn't stay in one spot."

The suspect was purported to have dwellings in Fallujah, Ah Damiya, and Rusafa. The last two being neighborhoods in Baghdad - Iraq's capital of over seven million people.

The Arkansas-based Company C has destroyed three mortar teams over the past several months. The individual captured on this particular mission is reportedly responsible for recruiting those and other teams from Fallujah.

"He was bringing other teams in from Fallujah in order to hit us simultaneously with mortars from two different locations," Fisher said. "He was the brain bringing them in and firing us up."

Upon searching the suspect's house, Soldiers found a mortar tube, mortar plate and bomb making material used to create roadside improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

Despite the capture of a suspected cell leader, the Soldiers stopped short of claiming victory.

"It was a relief to know we got the main cell leader but there are still mortar teams out there in our sector," said Fisher. "The threat is still there."



Staff Sgt. Robert Fisher, 37, of Carlisle, Ark., sifts through bomb-making material found at a suspect's house during a midday raid launched by Company C, 3rd Battalion, 153rd Infantry Regiment of the 39th BCT in eastern Baghdad.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Rebekah-mae Bruns, 39th BCT Public Affairs

Staff Sgt. Robert Fisher of Carlisle, Ark. and Spc. Jereme Coker, of Clarendon, Ark., move through the streets of Baghdad back to their vehicles after completing a raid that netted a suspected mortar cell leader, bomb making materials and a mortar tube with base plate.

Soldier Firefighters on the Scene in Taji

**By Cpl. Benjamin Cossel
122nd MPAD**

CAMP TAJI, Iraq-- Housed in an unassuming concrete structure, the remnant of a prior regime, a small group of men humbly awaits their next mission. Their job requires strength, humility, teamwork and courage. They are the firefighters of Camp Taji.

Assembled from the Puerto Rico National Guard's 215th Engineering Detachment and Massachusetts-based Army Reserve units, the 287th and 356th Engineering Detachments, the 1st Cavalry Division firefighters on Camp Taji play a pivotal role as first responders to a variety of situations ranging from hazardous material clean-up to crash and rescue services.

"As a firefighter you have to know so much more than how to put out a fire. With all the extra skills the guys here have, we are able to bring so much more to the table than just fighting fires," Staff Sgt. Alfredo Torres, of the

215th Eng. Det., said. "Many of our guys are certified Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs), so we are able to provide assistance to the medical companies here when needed. We have the ability to collect hazardous material and package it for disposal. We are trained in crash and rescue so we can support the aviation brigade (The 1st Cavalry Division's 4th Brigade Combat Team)"

In addition to the tangible skills related to their job, Soldiers of the detachment offer classes and inspect all of the many newly constructed buildings prior to their occupancy.

"About once a month we give fire prevention classes and instruction on how to properly use a fire extinguisher," said Boston resident Spc. Mohan Pilwah, a pump operator with the 287th Eng Det.

With so many different tasks for the team to accomplish, teamwork within the group is essential.

"We wouldn't be able to do



Photos by Cpl. Benjamin Cossel, 122nd MPAD

"Teamwork is an absolute must when you've only got two minutes to get all this equipment on," explained San Juan, Puerto Rico resident Spc. Pinael Roamel, as Spc. William Miranda (left) from Salinas, Puerto Rico, checks his air tank ensuring it's attached correctly. Both Soldiers are currently serving with the Puerto Rico National Guard's 215th Engineering Detachment, attached to the 1st Cav. Div.

what we do, were it not for the tight bond and sense of brotherhood that exists between each of us," Pilwah noted. "You go charging into a burning building and you just know you can rely on the guy behind you, and it extends beyond that. I know in that every mission I do, the guys

with me are going to be there, they've got my back."

Ask any firefighter what drives them, what compels them to go into a burning building where any mistake could mean their life.

"You do this because you love helping people," Pilwah



The last of his equipment having been checked and rechecked, San Juan, Puerto Rico resident Spc. Pinael Roamel with the Puerto Rico National Guard's 215th Engineering Detachment, stands ready to head to the scene of an emergency.

said. "And over here, the stakes are so much higher. Here... a Soldier's trailer goes up in flames due to a mortar strike, and that's all they've got in the world right now."

Fearless Men Forming the Future

By Pfc. Matthew McLaughlin
10th Mtn. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq-- All he wants to do after a long day's work is sit down for dinner with his wife and children. His route takes a detour, however, when men in masks with machine guns force him to stop. They threaten that if he goes to work tomorrow, he and everyone he loves will be killed.

Will he clock in the next day as if nothing happened? Will his life ever be the same?

To the average American, such a scenario would be inconceivable. But it is a common occurrence for Iraqi translators, who risk their lives to work with Multi-National Forces.

"Mahir," whose name has been changed for security reasons, is no stranger to the dangers a translator faces. Mahir has moved four times due to death threats to him and his family since he started working for Multi-National Forces. On one occasion, masked insurgents armed with AK-47s cornered and threatened to kill him.

"They searched my house, searched my computer," he said. "After this, I bought a different home."

The threats persisted and eventually Mahir had to leave his family and move to an Army base. He was given a pistol for protection.

Mahir is not the only translator who has been directly threat-

ened by anti-Iraqi forces.

"Zaki," whose name has also been changed, is an Iraqi doctor who lived through Saddam Hussein's reign. Armed insurgents have also chased him on his way home. He managed to escape, but they made gestures implying they will get him later. He continues to work with multinational forces and hopes to become an American citizen.

Why do translators take such risks? Money is a factor for many, Mahir said. But many also work to improve their country, said Master Sgt. Philip Lueders, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division.

"A lot of these guys are trying to make a difference as well as a living," he said. "They are civilians living in great danger. We need to appreciate that."

"I want to compensate for the lost days of my life," Zaki said. "U.S. forces are worthy to serve because they liberated us from Saddam."

Many translators like Zaki lived most of their lives under Hussein's rule. "Nabil," an Iraqi refugee who taught English in Lebanon, an illegal act under Hussein's regime, sacrificed safety and security and returned to Iraq to help his country. After his family was detained trying to meet him in Lebanon, Nabil fled to Portugal out of fear of Hussein's vengeance.

"If I continued to stay, they may send me back to Iraq in a coffin," Nabil said.

After the coalition forces invaded Iraq, Nabil returned to



By Pfc. Matthew McLaughlin, 10th Mtn. Div. Public Affairs

Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, talk through a translator to a group of Iraqis. In the past, some translators have been targeted by insurgents because of their affiliation with Multi-National Forces.

help in the rebuilding. It was his first time in his homeland since 1994.

"I was really anxious to do something for Iraq," he said. "This is one way that I can do it. This is our freedom; we have to fight for it."

Changes in infrastructure are going hand in hand with changes in liberties. The freedoms the Iraqi people were once denied are now available, Mahir said.

"Before it was like we lived in jail," he said. "We could not

walk down streets because they had Saddam's homes and palaces there. Now we have good lives with freedom. The one thing we are missing is safety. If we had safety, this would be paradise."

Mahir said if the war never happened, he would have left Iraq at all costs.

"I would lose everything, but I would leave," he said. "I can't live like how my father did."

All three translators said their experience working with American Soldiers has been posi-

tive.

"U.S. Soldiers are like a second family to me," Zaki said. "They are very kind, very helpful. Hopefully America will become a second home."

Despite the dangers of the job, none of the translators said they intend on quitting. They all said they are concerned for the future of their children, but do not fear their own death.

"Death is everywhere," Zaki said. "It is the final destination for everyone."

Students Benefit from Donations, Renovations

By Pfc. Brian Schroeder
10th Mtn. Div. Public Affairs

MUKASIB, Iraq-- Despite the continuous booms heard in the distance, Iraqi children began another school year at the primary and secondary schools in this Iraqi town outside of Baghdad. Here, children dress in their blue and white uniforms and pile 30 students deep into a classroom to expand their minds.

"All parents want their children to have a good future," said the Mukasib primary school headmaster. "They want them to be educated."

The coed primary school teaches children from ages six to 13 in ten classrooms, which received a fresh coat of paint in all of the rooms before the school term started. The students study subjects, such as mathematics, Arabic, geography, English and sports.

Last year the school was given new supplies to aid in the education of the children. Capt. Scott Shaw, commander of Company A, 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, said that over \$500,000 in school supplies were given to help with the new renovations of the schools.



By Pfc. Brian Schroeder, 10th Mtn. Div. Public Affairs

A classroom of Iraqi children takes a break from their studies to smile for a photograph at a primary school in the Iraqi town of Mukasib. Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment of the 10th Mountain Division helped to renovate classrooms, and provide security for the area.

"At the end of the war, these schools were pretty trashed," Shaw said. "A non-governmental organization came in and completely renovated the school. Afterwards, we came in and refurbished desks and provided chalkboards for the classrooms."

Along with school supplies and refurbishments, Soldiers from 2-14 Infantry offer protection for the school by patrolling the streets of Mukasib. Though there have been terrorist threats against schools that teach boys and girls in the same classroom, the Mukasib secondary school headmaster

said he feels confident in the security provided by coalition forces.

"Last year threats were a problem for our school," the headmaster said. "This year there are no problems. Parents are not scared to send their kids to school. The patrols in the streets make our school safer."

Safety concerns do not stop the children from wanting to learn, the headmaster said. He said the students like to learn and they want to learn because it is good for their future.

Shaw said the future of these children, and ultimately the future of Iraq, all starts with the education of the children.

"If we start these guys out in school and show them that there are bigger things out there than the town of Mukasib, there are bigger things out there than the city of Baghdad and there are bigger things out there than the country of Iraq, then we are helping ourselves," he said. "The reason people grow up to be terrorists is because they don't know the rest of the world. They don't know that there are other ways out there than showing brute force. They don't know that democracy is good."

More Than Just a New Paint Job



Spc. Delvin Goode, of Ft. Walton Beach, Fla., paints the body of the logo for the 1st Cavalry Division's 5th Brigade Combat Team as a part of a series of murals he's painting across concrete barriers in front of the division's headquarters building on Camp Liberty. "It's an honor to be able to use my talents to show my appreciation to all of the Soldiers in the 1st Cav. and the sacrifices they've made," Goode said. Goode is from 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, of the 4th Brigade Combat Team.



Photos by Spc. Marie Whitney, 122nd MPAD

The first two sections of a mural painted by Spc. Delvin Goode, of the 1st Cavalry Division's 2nd Battalion, 227 Aviation Regiment, honor the division's 1st Brigade Combat Team, "Ironhorse," and the 2nd BCT, "Black Jack." The Ft. Walton Beach, Fla. native is painting across concrete barriers in front of the division's headquarters building on Camp Liberty. Goode murals will represent every brigade when he completes this project.

Retention NCO Adds to Division Totals

By Spc. Andy Miller
122nd MPAD

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq-- For the final reenlistment ceremony of her career, Sgt. 1st Class Melissa McNorton wanted to do something special. So she asked her husband, recently promoted Chief Warrant Officer Charles McNorton, to reenlist her from Baghdad while she took the oath at Fort Hood via video teleconference. It was her husband's first reenlistment ceremony since becoming eligible by his promotion to a commissioned officer.

The memorable event for the McNortons, both from the 1st Cavalry Division, came during a memorable month for the division's reenlistment team. The team, which is responsible for helping the division meet its reenlistment goals, met their lofty annual and quarterly reenlistment goals during the last month of the Army's fiscal year.

"It's kind of historic," Sgt. Maj. Merle Henry, the 1st Cavalry Division's command career counselor, said of meeting the reenlistment mission. "This is probably the largest mission the Cav's ever had. We're almost right on track with the annual mission that we've had in previous years, but yet during this year, we've been deployed, we've been in combat, and we've done half of it in one quarter. It was tremendous."

The team's mission is based on the number of Soldiers who are in their reenlistment win-



Sgt. 1st Class Melissa McNorton (right), a career counselor with 1st Cavalry Division headquarters, is shown on a screen in Baghdad as she reenlists indefinitely from an office at Fort Hood. Her husband, Chief Warrant Officer Charles McNorton (left), a chief human resources technician with the 15th Personnel Services Battalion, swore in McNorton from Camp Liberty, Baghdad. It was the first time he performed a reenlistment ceremony.

That window is determined by factors including a Soldier's time left in service, promotion status and physical fitness condition.

While always fluid, the window is normally stabilized when Soldiers leaving the Army at their expiration of term of service (ETS) are replaced by Soldiers entering into their reenlistment window. But because of the Army's current stop loss policy, no Soldiers can ETS until the division redeploys back to Fort Hood next year. Because these Soldiers remain in their reenlistment window longer than the typical 12 months before their ETS date, the Cav's quarterly reenlistment mission is higher than normal.

"In a sense the Cav has cap-

tured a higher percentage rate than what they had been tasked to do because we're not operating under the normal 12 month reenlistment window, we're operating under a much larger window," Henry said.

This higher percentage was captured with the help of Henry's 12 career counselor team on the ground in Baghdad, and the division's retention NCOs doing their part to take care of Soldiers, Henry said. He calls the Cav's retention team the best in the Army. He said it's the reason the division was able to overcome challenges during this deployment like meeting mission, despite daunting reenlistment numbers and the difficulties posed by troops being stationed in different locations throughout Baghdad.

"The bottom line is that



Photos by Spc. Andy Miller, 122nd MPAD

Cav. spirit rolls again. It was a tremendous job by everybody. Nobody could stay on the sidelines to make this happen," Henry said.

Aside from making mission by reenlisting about 1,100 division Soldiers here in Baghdad this past quarter, the division has almost tripled its stabilization numbers over last year. The stabilization number is recorded as the number of Soldiers who reenlisted to stay with the First Team, instead of requesting a change of duty station.

"There's a few reasons for that," Henry said of the higher stabilization number. [Soldiers here] have a lot of esprit de corps; a lot of pride and the Cav's got a lot of history. And when they go back, they know they're staying in the Cav. They know they'll be stabilized there,

and it's going to be probably 18 to 24 months before they have to do another rotation. So there's some stability in knowing."

Melissa McNorton works as part of Henry's team as a career counselor back at Fort Hood. When she decided that her husband Charles, a chief human resources technician with the 15th Personnel Services Battalion, should be the reenlistment officer at her last reenlistment ceremony, Henry helped make it happen from his office in Baghdad 7,000 miles away. All you need for a reenlistment is that the flag be present, a commissioned officer, a non-commissioned officer and the Soldier. It's the reenlistment oath that constitutes the reenlistment, Henry said.

What If You Can't Take It With You?

By Staff Sgt. Susan German
122nd MPAD

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq-- With several months to go until their redeployment, Soldiers stationed here will soon start sorting through their belongings; making decisions on what to send home, as well as how to dispose of what is no longer needed.

Many have accumulated items, such as televisions, bicycles and refrigerators. With limited space to ship items home through military channels, along with high mailing costs incurred using the postal system, Soldiers have an option, other than using unit or post-exchange bulletin boards or word of mouth, to rid themselves of unwanted baggage before packing time comes.

Buyers and sellers can now link up on an electronic bulletin board called "Trigger's Marketplace," located on the 1st Cavalry Division's home page (CAVNET) on the Secure Internet Protocol Network (SIPRNET).

Maj. Edward Prem, the Division Automation Management Officer with the Communications (G-6) Section of the 1st Cavalry Division, came up with the idea for the site after finishing a DVD series. Not wanting to spend money on shipping the DVDs home, he hoped to recoup some of their cost by selling them.

Originally the location was limited to Camp Liberty, but Prem noted he has seen increased activity from other forward operating bases (FOBs) with current postings from Camps Black Jack, Taji, Falcon (formerly Camp Ferrin-Huggins), and Justice (formerly Camp Banzai), in addition to Camps Liberty and Victory South.

Although only available via SIPRNET, the G-6 Section is working to make access to the marketplace a little easier. Currently there's

a project called 'SIPR to the Company', where the section is trying to bring SIPR access to every single company in the division.

"I see this really picking up once we get closer to 2nd Brigade's redeployment date, and 256th ESB's [Enhanced Separate Brigade from Louisiana] arrival, as those Soldiers will want to purchase things and 2nd BCT will want to sell their things," Prem said.

Because the actual sale of items is the responsibility of the seller, Prem does not track final sales. Items stay on the site for 14 days or until sold, whichever is shorter. If an article has not sold during that time, sellers are allowed to request a resubmission through the webmaster.

Instructions are easy enough. Site users complete a form on the site's information page in which they describe the item they want to sell, set a price and provide e-mail or telephone contact information. Those looking to buy items describe the item and the amount they would like to spend. The categories available to select from include the following: cameras, DVDs and Movies, Electronics, Music, Sporting Goods, Video Games, and Miscellaneous.

Master Sgt. Dana Simmons, administrative non-commissioned officer in charge with Civil Military Operations of 1st. Cav. Div., from Little Rock, Ark., browsed the site a couple months ago searching for appliances and electronic equipment to help furnish her living quarters. Simmons said she looks at the site periodically for items she might like to take back home with her.

"We didn't have it [the web site] when we came in, but they [new units] can go on there and find all kinds of stuff that 2nd BCT is trying to get rid of at good prices," Simmons said.



Photo courtesy of Headquarters Company, 1st Cav. Div.



By Spc. Andy Miller, 122nd MPAD

1st Lt. Kevin Black (above left), executive officer for 1st Cavalry Division's headquarters company, shows off a fish he caught at Camp Liberty in Baghdad with Capt. Sean Tyson, headquarters company commander. The fish measured in at 38 inches, but remains of an unidentified species. Sgt. 1st Class Suree Valenzuela (left), the supply sergeant for 1st Cavalry Division's headquarters company, throws a line at Camp Liberty.

Donated Tackle Helps Troops Reel Them in at Camp Liberty

By Spc. Andy Miller
122nd MPAD

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq-- The large man-made lake between Camp Liberty and Camp Al-Nasr was once stocked with fish as part of Saddam Hussein's private hunting reservation, and has since become one of the largest overseas American military bases built since the Vietnam War. Though the lake is no longer stocked, the 1st Cavalry Division Soldiers stationed here have found that fishing season is still open.

The First Team fishing fanatics and amateurs who fish this lake received a boost recently when an Ala. sporting goods company collected hundreds of rod and reel combos and thousands of fishing accessories for donation to the Soldiers here.

The gear started arriving last June when the parents of 1st Lt. Kevin Black, the executive officer for 1st Cav. Div. Headquarters Company, contacted Simmons Sporting Goods Company of their hometown Birmingham, Ala. When the sporting goods company heard Soldiers in Iraq had a place to fish, they immediately donated about 20 rod and reel combos

along with around 200 lures from their shop, according to Black.

Simmons then went on to contact equipment distributors and other fishing supply company's, which, in turn, donated over 200 rod and reel combos, and over 1000 lures, along with hooks, line, tackle boxes and other fishing equipment. All told, over 500 pounds of fishing equipment and paraphernalia valued at several thousand dollars was shipped to First Team Soldiers from Birmingham.

"It really shows that the folks back home really support what we're doing over here," Black said. "I went and picked up some of [the gear] myself when I was home on R&R, and [the people at Simmons] couldn't thank people over here enough for what we're doing."

Sgt. 1st Class Stephen Sanders, a 1st Cav. Div. headquarters platoon sergeant, fished the lake everyday when he first arrived to Liberty. He said the fishing equipment donation is a tremendous morale booster for the troops stationed here.

"I was highly impressed that they sent so much. They didn't send just 10 fishing poles; they

sent 200 fishing poles, thousands of hooks and lures. It was awesome," Sanders said. "You know they're not sending all those supplies for publicity. You know they're actually doing it for dedication and support of the troops."

Black and other Soldiers from Headquarters Company devised a system where Soldiers can borrow the fishing gear by signing it out from the company's supply room. The Soldiers plan to expand the equipment sign-out system to the nearby Morale, Welfare and Recreation tent.

"[The donation] gives all the Soldiers the opportunity to fish on their time off," Sanders said. "You can't go find hooks and lures at the [Post Exchange]. They don't have the supplies that you need to go fishing."

Black said he encourages Soldiers to try their hand at the Iraqi lake, even if they've never fished before.

"We had a sergeant in here today who had never gone," Black said. "He went out there and caught a crab. He just had a few minutes after he got off shift last night. There's not telling what you'll catch out of that lake."



By Staff Sgt. Susan German, 122nd MPAD

Spc. Josh Sesters, an assistant fire support non-commissioned officer with 2nd BCT's Fire Support Element, looks at the list of items available on "Trigger's Marketplace".

In Recognition

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Comrades Remember Brother-in-Arms, Born Tanker

By Cpl. Bill Putnam
122nd MPAD

CAMP FALCON, Iraq-- This is a story about Staff Sgt. Robert "Robbie" Thornton, a tanker and platoon sergeant in Troop C, 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, who died Aug. 25 while on patrol in Baghdad's Al Rashid district.

Robbie loved everything about tanking. From the smells and sounds of gunnery to mentoring brand new and experienced tankers about pushing an M-1A1 Abrams tank to its limits; and, more than anything, Robbie loved patrolling in his Comanche Troop's area of southern Baghdad.

"I'm surprised you could learn so much from one person," said Spc. Jonathan Weink, a tanker in Comanche Troop and one of Robbie's Soldiers. "It was great to be taught by such an awesome guy."

Robbie is one of the many 1st Cavalry Division Soldiers who have been killed by insurgents here since the division arrived in April. His friends say Robbie died the way he wanted to - commanding a tank in battle.

Late on the evening of Aug. 25, Robbie was commanding a tank during a long patrol of Highway 8, the main highway leading from Baghdad International Airport through the Al Rashid District.

An insurgent fired a rocket-propelled grenade at his tank. The round hit the commander's hatch and exploded. Robbie was mortal-

ly wounded yet continued to fight until he passed out.

"He could not have died in a better way," recalled Staff Sgt. Kemper Jones, a tanker commander in Comanche Troop and Robbie's best friend. "He didn't die in a car accident, he didn't die of a heart attack; he died doing what he loved doing... he died a hero."

His death, indeed like the other deaths of Soldiers here, left a big hole in his unit. Robbie was a tanker, through and through; and even though he was Comanche Troop's headquarters platoon sergeant, in charge of the mundane administrative part of the unit, Robbie would always volunteer to command a tank or even to act as a main gun loader.

"Robbie was the kind of guy, whether he liked you or not, he would do anything for you," said Sgt. Mark Thomson, the Comanche Troop communications sergeant and Robbie's roommate. "He could separate personal from professional."

Jones and Robbie went back a long way, and their friendship was pretty strong.

"He was always fun to be around," Jones said. "That's why I would say he was my best friend."

"He made the field a lot of fun," Jones said. Almost every field problem, Robbie would make an impromptu tanker's barbecue - a spare road wheel filled with charcoal - and they'd grill meat out there; an early riser, he'd make hot coffee every morning,



Photo courtesy of Sgt. Mark Thomson, Company C, 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment

Staff Sgt. Robert "Robbie" Thornton, left, and Sgt. Jeremy Camren, get ready to roll out on yet another mission into Baghdad's Al Rashid district. Staff Sgt. Thornton died Aug. 25 fighting insurgents in Baghdad.

peer and mentor, was strong within Comanche Troop.

"That's how his peers and Soldiers look at him, too: as someone to look up to," Weink said.

"He went straight to it, right up to the fight," he noted.

His love for tanking and soldiering leads Jones, Thomson and Weink to believe Robbie died the way wanted - on a tank, in battle.

It didn't matter if, as the headquarters platoon sergeant,

Robbie didn't need to be out there. He absolutely wanted to go out on patrol; he would act as a gunner or as a loader, sometimes for Jones, but more often than not for other tank crews, Jones said.

"He loved tanking that much," Jones said. "He was made to be in the Army and be a tanker. It's all he ever did."

Robbie was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star Medal and Purple Heart for his actions that night.

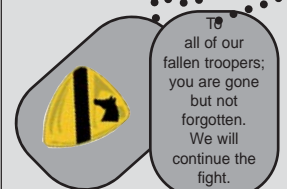
Capt. Jonathan Hoyle, commander of Headquarters Company, 5th Brigade Combat Team, speaks in remembrance of his two fallen Soldiers, Sgt. Pamela Osbourne and Spc. Anthony Monroe at a memorial ceremony outside Brigade Headquarters at Camp Falcon Oct. 16. They were killed during a rocket attack on the base, Oct. 11. Osbourne, 38, served as a supply specialist. The Miami native is survived by her husband Rohan, and children Glenton, 19, Rohan, Jr., 14, and Latoya, 9. "Her positive influence on our lives is evident, and she will be missed but never forgotten," her eulogy read. Twenty-year-old Monroe of Bismarck, N.D. is survived by his mother. He was a light-wheeled mechanic. Monroe enjoyed writing volumes of poetry on his freetime. He dedicated his evenings to learning Arabic with local nationals on Camp Falcon.



By Spc. Al Barrus, 122nd MPAD

Our Fallen

Sgt. 1st Class
Michael
Battles, Sr.
1-21 Field
Artillery



Ghoulish Evening Celebrated with Dance and Trance



Photos by Spc. Al Barrus, 122nd MPAD



An overcast sky cloaked Camp Liberty as drizzle dampened the thirsty terrain and a waning moon occasionally peaked out of the clouds. Even for a desert it felt like Halloween on Camp Liberty Oct. 31. All that was missing were the trick-or-treaters and Jack-O-Lanterns. Outside of the familiar elements, and inside the Camp Liberty MWR center, Spc. David Michaels (above right), a Bremerton, Wash., native of 1st Battalion, 303rd Armor Regiment, attached to 1st Cav., swings glow sticks while he and other Soldiers dance to trance music. The All Hallows Eve Trance-Athon featured mixed music by Spc Marlon Ramirez, AKA "DJ Dumas" (left), of 1-303rd Armor. About 30 Soldiers in uniforms and a couple civilians in costume filled the upstairs dance area, under black lights and smoke machines. The event ran from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m.

Trigger Pull: NFL Season Sows Shocking Surprises

In late June (Cav Country, Vol. 1, Issue 5 to be exact), I made my pre-season predictions for this year's National Football League tilt. To be frank (even though my name is Dave), I was WAY OFF THE MARK!

The NFL has hit mid-season form, and the race to the Lombardi Trophy has taken some very strange twists ... even up to the midway mark.

I actually picked the Miami Dolphins to win the AFC Eastern Division in June. (?) But that was before Ricky Williams declared himself retired and newly acquired wide receiver David Boston went down for the year with a knee injury thereby eliminating any hope of an offense in Miami. The Fish are the biggest surprise, because they are so bad.

Other shockingly poor first half performances go to: the Oakland Raiders, Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Carolina Panthers and surprisingly slow starts by the Kansas City Chiefs and my beloved Green Bay Packers.

On the plus side, no one expected the New York Giants to be in the hunt for a division title; the Atlanta Falcons lead the NFC South Division (at 6-2); and Jacksonville, not Indianapolis, leads the AFC South at mid-season.

Trigger Pull

MSG Dave Larsen



Sports Buff

Looking ahead to the stretch run, I've got a Minnesota Viking's fan joining me to pick the winners and losers for Week 10. Spc. Mike Peterson is a 23-year-old scout serving as the driver in the 1st Cavalry Division's Information Operations office.

Peterson, a four-year Army veteran, grew up in Taylors Falls, Minn., attending Chisago High School and lettering as a track and cross-country star. He said his best time in the mile was 4:40 ... his best two-mile a 10:40. Peterson grew up addicted to the purple and gold, an inherited trait.

"My Grandpa was a big fan of Fran Tarkenton," he said. "That love of the Vikings was passed down to me."

Peterson predicts his Vikings will end up "at least 10-6 and win the NFC North Division." He's less charitable to neighboring Cheeseheads.

"The Packers will lose this



Spc. Mike Peterson

weekend [to the Vikings]," he said. "They'll end up 7-9, not even good enough for second place."

Here's how the rest of our weekends picks pan out:

Baltimore @ NY Jets

The Jets have surprised a lot of people (including me, who picked them to bring up the rear in the AFC East). They won't surprise Ray Lewis or the Ravens defense. The Viking fan and I agree: Baltimore wins.

Chicago @ Tennessee

The Bears and the Titans are struggling. Again, Peterson agrees with me as we both take the Titans at home.

Detroit @ Jacksonville

Peterson likes the Lions on the road, while I like the Jaguars at home. It'll be close, but the Jags have been winning all their close ones so far.

Houston @ Indianapolis

No-brainer here: the Colts roll over the Texans at home.

Kansas City @ New Orleans

The Chiefs set an NFL record by scoring eight rushing touchdowns against the Falcons. The Saints aren't as good as Atlanta. I pick the Chiefs to take this road game ... with ease. Peterson said he likes the Saints in the 'Big Easy.'

Pittsburgh @ Cleveland

Bill Cowher inspired his charges to break up the Patriots' winning streak at 21 games. The Browns are simply not a good football team. Peterson and I agree again: the Steelers stomp Cleveland.

Seattle @ St. Louis

The Rams beat the Seahawks earlier this year in Seattle. We both think the 'Hawks are looking for some payback. We'll take Seattle on the road, giving St. Louis the blues.

Tampa Bay @ Atlanta

Professional football pundits are saying that Michael Vick is still learning the West Coast Offense. Despite his troubles with sacks and turnovers this year, his team still wins ball games. Tampa Bay is a shadow of the team that won a Super Bowl two seasons ago. We agree: the Falcons feast on Buccaneer flesh.

Cincinnati @ Washington

Washington has had trouble

scoring points. Cincinnati has trouble stopping people from scoring. So, this one is a toss-up. Peterson takes the home team (Redskins) and I'm going with the Bengals (though I don't know why).

Carolina @ San Francisco

How the mighty have fallen! The Panthers have gone from NFC Champs to NFC Chumps in no time. Peterson said they'll beat the equally inept 49ers, but I'm taking the 'Niners at home.

Minnesota @ Green Bay

We covered this one: Go Packers!

NY Giants @ Arizona

No discussion here either (or disagreement): the Giants romp in the desert.

Buffalo @ New England

Another no-brainer pick: we both like the Patriots at home.

Philadelphia @ Dallas

As I write this column, the Eagles are the only undefeated team in the NFL. Peterson likes the Eagles over the 'Boys. I think Bill Parcell will get his team up for this one and find a way to win ugly at home on Monday night.

There you have it, Sports Fans: another issue with prognostication and punditry. Join me in the funny papers by e-mailing me at david.j.larsen@1cd.army.mil.

Go Packers!